



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

NMFS Announces Public Meeting to Discuss the Draft Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan and Associated Research and Monitoring Activities

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces a public meeting in Wanchese, North Carolina, on June 22, 2006, to discuss the draft Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan and associated research and monitoring activities. NMFS established the Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team in June 2005 to address incidental serious injuries and mortalities of short- and long-finned pilot whales in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery, as required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The team met several times over the last year and came to consensus on a draft Take Reduction Plan in June 2006. The draft Take Reduction Plan contains proposed management measures to reduce serious injuries and mortalities of both pilot whales and Risso's dolphins in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, as well as recommendations for additional research and data collections.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for NMFS staff to meet with longline fishermen to discuss the draft Take Reduction Plan and associated research and monitoring efforts that may be initiated this summer, answer questions, and identify pelagic longline fishermen that may be willing to voluntarily participate in research activities.

Planned research activities for the Mid-Atlantic Bight include:

- The effects of different hook types on pilot whale interactions
- Visual and acoustic observations of pilot whales around pelagic longline vessels
- Acoustic recordings of interactions between pilot whales and longlines
- Interviewing fishermen regarding their interactions with marine mammals

NMFS will also discuss the potential for expanded observer coverage of vessels fishing in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, and review observer coverage requirements for selected vessels.

The meeting will be held Thursday June, 22, 2006, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at Willie R. Etheridge Seafoods (packing out facility and dock), 4561 Mill Landing Rd., Wanchese, NC 27981, (252) 473-5272.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to Highly Migratory Species pelagic longline fishery participants to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information about this public meeting, contact Vicki Cornish at (727) 824-5312, Vicki.Cornish@noaa.gov, or Charlie Bergmann at (228) 623-0748, Charles.Bergmann@noaa.gov.

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NMFS Southeast Regional Administrator

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